

Hospitality

The "social season" is upon us, and few of us but feel that we should like to open our houses and our hearts to the entertainment of our friends and neighbors, were it not that we fear the added expense and labor which an erroneous conception of what hospitality really is leads to feel is an absolute necessity. Many of us would be glad to ask our friends to little informal dinners, luncheons or teas but for the supposed inroads upon our already badly strained incomes which such entertaining would inevitably make, if we set out to "do the right thing," so we shut out of our lives some of the sweetest moments, and try the risky experiment of "living unto ourselves," which the Good Book explicitly tells us we cannot do with any degree of safety. In living alone, we grow narrow, sordid, embittered, pessimistic, and altogether withered in soul and sensibilities. By this means, we lose countless opportunities of doing good, not only unto others, but unto ourselves.

For those of us who are really socially inclined—and there are few of us who are not—the expense of hospitality is largely a matter of the resourcefulness of the hostess. True hospitality does not consist in burdening ourselves with expenses which an illy be met, and there is a large lesson in the "dinner of herbs" story for those who read aright. A letter lies before me from one of those who has, to her own satisfaction at least, solved the problem of entertaining very graciously on a very small income. She tells me that, in her village are some ten to twenty ladies of a literary turn, but not nearly all of them "writers." Until about a year ago, they hardly knew each other, and were all of them "starving for companionship." One afternoon two of them met in a public place and decided they would at least try to be sociable and draw others into their plan as they could. They decided to spend an afternoon each week at the house of some one of the band, asking others to meet with them for social, musical and literary entertainment. As none of them were burdened with this world's goods and none of them kept help in the house, while some of them were wage earners, they resolved to eliminate the "refreshment" feature, either entirely, or to confine it to the simplest and plainest possible, thus incurring no expense and making no extra work for the hostess. They were to attend the meetings simply clad and in no sense to make of them "dress" occasions. Any of

them might bring in a friend, but the entire meeting must be free from formality, or expense. If, at an anniversary, or other occasion calling for festivity, there should be attempts at dinner or luncheon getting, there should be a general burden-bearing, and the burden should be of the simplest.

Thus, for a year, these women have met, interchanged thought, and benefited each other in many ways, without embarrassment or burden. They have endeavored to be mentally and socially at their best, have enjoyed to their fill their comradeship, with no fret and worry over a deficient larder or a depleted pocket book.

And when I read her letter, I felt I should wrong our Home readers if I withheld its contents. Many of us might, to our great advantage, go and do likewise.

Odds and Ends

Odds and ends—we all have them—scraps of dress goods of various kinds, which we can not quite decide to throw away as some day we may need them, and yet which accumulate until we often need almost a separate room to hold them. Some rainy day, or perhaps, some idle hour, when that "nameless unrest" which you can not account for, comes over you, pull out your bundles, or your boxes, or your bureau drawers, or your closet, or your attic of scraps, and delve into the history of your wearing apparel for the past ten years (it may represent your life time) and work your imagination along the line of a few household conveniences, which those who live in flats find to be actual common necessities. For every wearable garment in the wardrobe (and the up-to-date housekeeper does not tolerate any other) reserve a few patches, as necessity may arise for their use. If you have two or three good-sized rolls of dainty organdie, cut the necessary sizes for bureau drawer and chiffonier drawer pads, using one layer of thin wadding, a sprinkling of sachet powder, basting neatly and firmly until all edges are nicely turned in and sewed, and each pad is tufted at regular intervals with baby ribbon, if found among the scraps. Thin lawns or silks may also be used in this way. A piece of double-faced cotton flannel, which had been partly used for lining four-in-hand ties, was fitted into the buffet drawer, as a nice resting place for the every-day silver. For souvenir spoons, a piece of white eiderdown made a pretty case, lined with pink wash ribbon, with ties of the same. For best silver, cases of single faced cotton flannel, or outing flannel of the wooly kind, were easily planned. Thin white lawns, left from various gowns, make pretty ties or tucked stocks, with the addition of lace or embroidery scraps. No end of pretty and useful articles may be fashioned from linen pieces, both white and colored stocks, belts, dollies of all descriptions, handbags, etc., all more or less heavily ornamented with cross-stitch work, or solid or open-work white, or colored embroidery. Of outing flannel, make sacks for wearing over the night dress in extreme cold weather, as the sleeping room should be well aired and use various odd scraps for cleaning gloves (with paste) and for polishing shoes and furniture. Wooly outing cloth also makes a nice broom bag, for slipping over the broom to be used on polished floors. Of old woven underwear, but away the ragged portions, saving the smaller good parts for patching, and putting aside the larger parts for dusters, house cloths etc. The bugbear of old stockings may become a blessing by cutting off the feet, slitting up the leg portion opposite the seam, and running up the two pieces on the ma-

chine, laying the top of one piece to the bottom of the other, thus making the cloth more uniform in shape. Of pieces of denim, make bags of all descriptions, using also cretonne, silk-oline, satine, etc., for sofa cushions, chair backs and so on. At the back of the hall closet tack a bag of green denim, fitting exactly the width of the closet, with receptacles for rubber shoes. On the inside of that same closet door is a good place for a bag of pink striped ticking for holding dusters. These are flat wall pocket bags, of course. In my bedroom closet are cases for shoes, dusters, etc.—Selected.

Cooking For Two

Cooking for two is really more difficult than cooking for ten, and even an experienced cook finds difficulty in managing food in such small quantities so as to avoid waste and too much warming over. But two healthy people will manage to consume a good deal of food, and with careful selection as to keeping qualities, and dainty methods of doing over dishes, there need be little, if any waste of broken victuals.

Cooking for two need not necessarily be a continual re-hashing and warming-over. The housewife should study to cook just enough, and no more of many dishes, and experience will teach her both the quantity and the kind to use. Many things may be cooked in (small) quantities, and their use varied with other "small quantities," so that no one kind shall be placed upon the table on several consecutive occasions. The cook books and magazines are full of excellent suggestions and directions for making all sorts of dishes, and for warming over such as the re-heating will rot spoil, and with due attention to the daintiness of the table service, the diminutive dishes may be made very attractive.

Thorns

There is no pathway, however sheltered, that has not its thorns; thorns that tear the garments of the soul at every turn; that pierce the tired feet, however lightly one may step; that sting our hands as we grasp some coveted joy; that wound us in a thousand cruel ways, leaving burning scars and disfigurements wherever they touch. However short the journey, the thorns are there; sometimes the journey is long—long, and over and about it may lie, blanket-wise, the shadow which we, only, can see; we can not escape them.

Go to your neighbor's fireside; you will find the thorns, even as at your own. The wail of the little traveler, just beginning life's journey—the pitiful sob of the one nearing the journey's end—do you not hear them? The aged parents are bowed with pain; the thorns pierce deeply. Daughter, the darling of their fading years, has gone out of their home; over the hill, out of the sight of the fading eyes. She does not come back; lost, somewhere in the great world; their hands may not touch her; their cry is unanswered. Or it may be the boy that has wandered off into a far country; poor prodigal; poor mother. The deep ravines the tears have washed in fading cheeks tell how the thorns enter the soul; the bowed head of the broken father show their cruel scars.

In the cemetery is the grave—new, or covered with the mantle Nature kindly bestows with years. Baby is asleep there; husband's arms may be folded under this mound; wife, the light of the home-hearth, lies under that one. Father, mother, brother, sister, friend—they are all there, and the earth is studded with thorns we can not weed out. But the cruel thorns do not grow out of the grave-covering. There are living sorrows

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harder to bear than those the grave hides from sight.

But the thorns should not grow alone. There should be flowers and foliage, and these will often blunt the sharp sting, if only we use them aright. The human heart, filled with sympathy and fraternal love is a flower that may shed its perfume over the darkest pathway, and the thickest clouds can not eclipse the light of a soul filled with faith and love. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," is a salve for the deepest wound; a healing for the cruellest hurt. In the midnight, it relieves the darkness; in the morning, it tempers the glare of the sun; in the heat of noontide it is like the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land." O, thou, whose feet must walk upon the thorns, whose hands must bleed from the keen piercings; whose heart must be torn and whose trust must be betrayed, over all the wretchedness of loss and pain may grow the blossoms of the love that falls not—the light that will never grow dim. He, whose brow bled beneath their cruel piercings, has opened the way—has shown you how to triumph over their tortures. He has offered you the "grace to bear" your anguish even as He has borne his own.

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